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A DISCOURSE
BY
EMIL G. HIRSCH

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**DR. E. G. HIRSCH, Editor**

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## THE JEWS AND JESUS.

On might suppose that the Jew had been long enough before the world at large to be fully understood and to be justly estimated. But it seems that for many circling decades to come, the Jew will have to be resigned to the fate not to be kown, to figure as an archæological specimen for some kindly disposed persons, to serve as a target for poisoned arrows, drawn from the quiver of malevolent minds: in one word, forever to be misrepresented—not merely by such as close their eyes willingly to the brighter truth—but alas! even by others whose heart beats with rare loyalty to whatever is good, noble and uplifting. The books of all ages are witnesses to this sad lot, which has befallen the Jew. We cannot complain, therefore, that only in modern days this bitter tide has visited the son of Israel. What makes this experience in recent months more galling, is the contrast presented by the treatment accorded to the Jew, and the general drift of modern thought; is the disappointment keenly edged by the reflection that our hopes and expectations soar so high, while actual conduct still stilts in low planes. Whatever else may be said about the Jew and his religion, this one thing seems to be taken for granted, needing no further inspection or proof, that the Jew by his very religion, is led to be hostile to Christianity; that the Jewish heart bulges with hatred for all that is not labeled Jewish, and that especially he whose name for millions of

human beings tokens the very highest, is spurned and scorned with bitter contempt by the devoted descendants of Abraham, now as ever before. Nothing, however, can be further from the truth than this. Certainly the literature of Judaism ought to be taken into account before this sweeping verdict of condemnation is apodictically pronounced; and if there be those to whom the literature of Judaism is a sealed book, they should remember the canon of honesty that no one may speak of things of which, by the nature of their proclamation, he must be ignorant. It is a very comfortable but very cheap method with unperturbed self-assurance to repeat old errors, to voice old prejudices; but will an honest man indulge in these tactics? He will spurn to huckster in never so venerable prejudices unless convinced that their basis is the granite of fact, as revealed by an honest endeavor to probe things to the hard pan at the bottom. Those who have studied, or are competent to do so, the old Jewish literature, cannot with good conscience repeat the charge, that the Jew, by his very religion is prompted to cherish the spirit of hostility to all other religions. They cannot again lend word to the unjust though old indictment, that the Jew, rejecting the prophet of Nazareth, heaps upon this name, which is symbol of truth and emblem of love for millions, contempt and scorn.

Toward Christianity Judaism as a religion, even orthodox Judaism, has always preserved an attitude of kindliest fairness. Whatever laws may be found in the old rabbinnical codes bearing upon idolatry, atheism, blasphemy, and the whole ilk and brood of breaches of religious rectitude of this black order, Christianity was always officially and most emphatically declared not

to be one of the company of religious or rather irreligious systems to which the laws and regulations in question, enacted to stem the tide of idolatry and blasphemy, could apply. R. Joseph Caro is certainly a trustworthy exponent of Jewish orthodoxy of the most uncompromising stamp. In his "Beth-Joseph," a ritual code of high authority ('Hoshen Mishpat, 266), he says: "The non-Jews גוים of our days do not belong to the category denoted in the Talmud as 'Akkum' and none of the laws enacted against these is applicable to them." And his view and express statement has passed into the preface of well nigh all editions of the Shul'han-Arukh. Christianity is by Jewish orthodoxy, even, recognized to be a monotheistic religion. It is accorded willingly the function of having been among God's appointed agents to carry the light of monotheism out into the darkened world. Men who are at home in medieval Jewish literature need no longer assurance to quiet whatever apprehensions they might offhandedly have entertained on this score. Time will not allow us to give ear to more than a few voices composing the chorus, sounding in all centuries and countries the same glad song of tolerant recognition. Rabbi Jacob Emden, of Altona (1698-1776), puts the conception of the rabbis most pithily when he says: "Christianity was founded for the heathen, not as a new religion, but as the old, which commanded the keeping of the seven Noa'hidic (fundamental moral) laws, that had fallen into oblivion among the nations, and therefore were proclaimed anew by the Christian apostles." "The Christians," says another, R. Isaac ben Sheshet (1400-1440), "are to be considered as גרי תושב proselytes." These sentiments

and similar expressions abound in the writings of the old Jewish teachers. Every tyro in that field of learning is acquainted with this glorious abundance of testimony to similar purport.*

The Jews had no reason to love or to hate the founder of Christianity. They might have had provocation to hate those who pretended to be his followers; for the history of the Jews beginning with the Christian era clear down to this latest day, is but a succession of persecutions, such as no other set of human beings has been called upon to endure. No other religion was tried so sorely by another faith, her own daughter, officially at least professed by men in power. Talk of Asiatic brutality; of African barbarism! Why, what the savage tribes commit in their rude ignorance is kindness compared to what was practiced upon the Jews! Need I go into details? Scarce a year passed from the third Christian century to the French Revolution, but somewhere in Europe, in the very name of Christianity, Jews were slaughtered by the thousands. Innocence is no protection; weakness is no armor; wisdom affords no escape; old age does not stay the hand that would strike! With fire and dungeon; with rack and torture, they come,—the pretended apostles of a religion of love! Alas, the provocation to hate was ample; but nevertheless Christianity was not hated! Hatred must be made of sterner stuff than the estimate of Christianity's providential mission which again and again finds place in the books of rabbinical writers! Is it hatred that prompted one, *f. i.*, to say: "The founder of Chris-

*Hamburger's Encyclopedia, Suppl. II, under the caption, "Christen," has collected most of the passages in this roll of honor.

tianity has conferred a twofold benefaction upon the world; on the one hand, he emphasized the eternal obligation of the law of Moses, on the other he led the heathen from idolatry to the knowledge of the (seven) laws of morality"? The Jews in the middle ages would gladly have refrained from discussing Christianity, had they been permitted so to do. The silence about Jesus in the Talmud is significant. Few are the personal references to him, though in an indirect manner the doctors of the Talmud show that they are, to a certain extent, acquainted with his labors, as related in the traditions, probably not yet rigidly crystalized, of his followers. Under the cover of Balaam's name, they assign to him a prophetic mission. Controversies, indeed, are recorded with the adherents of the rising new sect. But these run not along the line of Jesus's personality but of dogmatic differences or of the correct interpretation of Biblical passages. A broad tolerance marks even Talmudical polemics. In post-Talmudic centuries, the Jews enter the lists only as forced combatants. Bishops and prelates, kings and counts cited the Jewish scholars to dangerous disputations. In defense, not in defiance, do the rabbis take part in the combat. They are not the assailants, but always the assailed! That they should take advantage of all resources of logic or learning, none will reckon to their blame. The controversies turn largely on so-called Messianic prophecies. No wonder, then, that also the commentators on the passages where Jewish interpretants took their own counsel and differed radically from the constructions of the Christian, should have embraced the opportunity to speak somewhat at length on the points in issue. Nor is it surprising that Jew-

ish thinkers in treating of doctrinal chapters have, in defining the position of Judaism, occasionally made excursions into the domain of Christian theology. But, for the most part, this is done in a spirit of reserve and becoming dignity. As far as I know, the name of the founder of Christianity is but rarely mentioned by the Jewish debaters and writers. And where it is, it is without any manifestation of what might be misconstrued into contempt or scorn, though, of course, the absence of any peculiar reverence is also noticeable. Jesus is generally cited as הנוצרי the "Nazarene." A certain familiarity with the New Testament is also displayed on the part of some, if not all, Jewish controvertants. Whatever there may have been of bitterness in these compulsory polemics was caused by the Jewish apostates. These worthies, then as now, deemed it rare sport to "cast stones into the very well from which they had drunk." Often blatant ignoramuses, always dishonest self-seekers, they had no compunction to twist into nets and snares for Judaism and the Jews the garbled or disfigured knowledge they possessed of the faith of their fathers. These foul knaves, the rabbis were called to meet. They would have been superhuman had they altogether suppressed the rising indignation at this insult added to injury. There is, however, one black exception to this unbroken rule of dignified controversy, so far as the Jews had a share in it. Some time before the 9th century, further than this the date cannot be determined, appeared a pasquille of the vilest sort, "Tol'doth Jeshu" (Life of Jesus), purporting to give the story of the great Nazarene. Its original language was probably the aramæan, and Syria may have been the home of the author. This Apocryphon

is a cesspool of all nastiness, of fabrications out of the whole cloth; the responsibility for it Judaism declines to shoulder, as its sentiments are not now, and never were, shared by the Jews.

It stands to reason that with the birth of modern science and new investigations in the domain of religious thought, history and literature, the attention of Jewish scholars was no less attracted to nascent Christianity than was that of non-Jewish students.

Before there was a call for Jewish historians to deal with the life and the character of the carpenter's son of Bethlehem, historical studies had first to make their influences felt in and out of Judaism. It is merely in modern time that the comparative science of religion has been ushered into blessed utility. Only within the last sixty years have scholars found themselves moved to trace back the course of religious development, and to peep if possible into the laboratory of history, whence those peculiar forces are sent forth on their errand, which we spell by the name of this or that religious movement. Only within the last sixty or seventy years, or perhaps we may go as far back as Lessing, was there any occasion to search into the part or function played by the great personalities whose names are thundering down the vestibules of time, in that great ocean styled by us, growing, moving, striving humanity. Before the method of these studies and their relation to the growth of ideas, potent in human evolution, had been discovered, there was no occasion for the Jewish thinker to devote time and attention to the life and the character of the founder of a religion not his own. Certainly the thinkers of the middle ages could not be attracted to go into this field by the promise of finding there a sweet

grain which did not wave in their home acres. The contrast was pressed upon them most painfully, that if what Christianity presented to the Jew was love, the law of the Jews was much better than the thus pretended higher revelation. The Jew must have possessed at home whatever he needed to make life sweet. Say what you will of the Judaism of the middle ages, call it narrow, deride it as superstitious, denounce it as slavery to form, unless lost to all sense of justice, or without the power to dive beneath the surface of the seeming, to the roots of the real, you cannot but witness to the incontrovertible fact that for sweetness and spirituality of life, the Jew of the Ghetto, the Jew of the middle ages, the Jew under the yoke of the Talmud, challenges the whole world. No life is sweeter and at the same time stronger than theirs. In their home glowed the chaste flame of love; in their heart leaped upward the blaze of aspiration. Talk of martyrdom! It has become fashionable for the liberal platform lecturers to make much of the story of the great heroes who died for the intellectual freedom of the world, beginning with Socrates and Jesus; through the darker ages to the dawn of the Reformation, and enumerating the many stars whose light went out in the blaze of the funeral pyre, or whose life blood oozed away under the executioner's axe, they finally wind up with a special eclat with Spinoza, that victim of the intense bigotry, as our liberal platform lecturers would have it, which nowhere else but in the narrow synagogue could have asserted itself. Certainly, the memory of these is hallowed forever! But for martyrdom and devotion to principle the lot of the Jew and his fortitude are to the fate and steadfastness of Socrates and Spinoza, a

crown diamond compared to the paste imitation on the ring of a low, vulgar gambler. No other record of heroism for principle's sake is so bright and inspiring as are the tear-stained scrolls, the "Memoir Books," chronicling the slaughter of the Jews in the middle ages. Heroism of this kind is spiritual in the highest degree; and therefore for the spirit's chastening or sweetening influence the Jew found no necessity to go beyond his own religious temple, and to look for example beyond his own religious community. A religion that could make life worth living, with its hopes deferred and its duties redoubled, under such distressing circumstances, was religion strong and sweet enough. Its adherents had no need to hunger for bread other than their own teaching. What they needed was provided in the synagogue and within the walls of their own contracted home. Yea, their home was filled with a peace which the world could not give, and which the world could not take away.

Only in modern times, when scholars began to investigate the processes which resulted in these grand movements, the positive religions of modern day, did also Jewish scholars waken to the profitableness of devoting thought and time to the life, the labors and the character of the prophet of Nazareth. Not merely we, the liberals, have willingly accepted the invitation to study that chapter of our history, which more than any other has affected civilization, but the more conservative, yea, even the orthodox, have with equal zeal, and with total absence of prejudice, investigated these portentous days, when, according to common tradition, Jesus taught in the synagogues of Galilee, and died at Golgotha, a victim of Roman politics and of priestly

intrigue. All of us are agreed, waving even the question of the historical authenticity of the gospels, that Jesus was a noble character; that in him quivered the fullest measure of spirituality; that he believed in his own destiny and duty; that he taught a high life. But all of us are also agreed in this: that what he taught was not a revelation new to the synagogues; for neither in his morality nor in his religious hope did he advance one step beyond the teachings of contemporaneous Judaism.

He cannot lay claim to originality; what he teaches is the echo of the doctrines he himself had heard from the lips of his own Jewish masters; what lived and moved and stirred in him, that lived as fully in the hearts of many others in those days. He was distinguished for his love for the common people; in him beat a heart attuned to the higher possibilities of the human kind. For him religion was not altogether form and ceremony; it was devotion and duty. But for all this, he did not stand on a higher altitude than did the teachers of his own days, teachers in the synagogue; teachers that never dreamed, as indeed he never did dream, to hold a commission from on high to bring to the world a new light. We grant, for argument's sake, that he lived and labored during the critical period to which the gospels assign him,—though this has been doubted;—we take, without further inquiry, the statements of the gospels as they are. With these data a conclusion is forced upon one in the least familiar with the Jewish thought of that time, that in what and how he taught and prayed, in his hopes and his illusions, —in no particular did he set himself in opposition to the synagogues of his day. Nor did he rise to a higher

plane of religious uplook than had risen many of his predecessors; many of those among whom he lived. The Lord's Prayer is indeed a wreath of the most beautiful flowers of the Jewish liturgy. It has become the most powerful inspiration of all times. But in that casket, containing so many jewels, there is not a single gem but had graced in one form or other the crown worn by the synagogue. Some, even professional liberal lecturers, in season and out of season, tell their admiring friends—and strange to say, among these the Jews predominate—that such a thought as "Our Father which art in Heaven," could never have crossed the lips of a Jew, bound in the fetters of the Judaism of this or any other age,—yea, the Judaism of our day not excepted. It is true the Christian theological seminaries never weary of teaching this fallacy. Probably these liberal lecturers, notwithstanding their profuse profession to have overcome the limitations of their early Presbyterian education, have remained derelict to the ethical duty to revise their stock of information carried away from school. And thus, with an assurance that among Jews would be characterized by the word חוצפה they repeat in season and out of season, the slander that Judaism can never unseal the lips of its devotees to stammer forth the sublime, the inspiring invocation, "Our Father which art in Heaven." It is a pity, indeed, that historical truth compels us to spoil these ethical lecturers' stock in trade. There is not an old Siddur, an old prayer-book but has this very appeal to God, אבינו שבשמים "Our Father which art in Heaven"; and the Jewish prayers which begin in this wise are not posterior to the period when the Lord's Prayer became known; if anything, they precede in

time the composition and the promulgation of the New Testament formula.

Judaism then has not learned the thought, "Our Father which art in Heaven," from the mouth of Jesus, but Jesus learned it from the lips of Judaism. "Ah!" says now the ethical lecturer, and those that make a parade of their liberalism, either ignorant of the facts in point or willingly blind to them, "Our Father which art in Heaven, in the petition of the Jew, signifies the father of the Jews; no one else is God's son except the Jew." Again, in urging this error in the defense of his first, the former Presbyterian clergyman reveals that though he may have been a student at the theological seminary, he has never grasped his Old Testament—a collection of writings which certainly a clergyman and a liberal lecturer without question should have read. Did not one of the later prophets living at least four hundred or five hundred years before Chrstianity call out: "Have we not all one Father? Has not one God made us all?" Are there not in this old Bible, psalms of the broadest fellowship, or books which breathe the fire of indignant protest against the thought that God was merely the God of the Israelites; that God had no care for the strangers, or love for members of other nationalities? No; whatever may be said about Jewish exclusivity and national pride, the charge must be dismissed for want of evidence, while Judaism can easily prove her case. Her genius is toward universal fellowship. Jewish universalism is quick at all times; is quick even in Talmudic Judaism; quick in the Judaism of today. Long before the great teacher of Nazareth went out to clothe in sound the thought of the universal fatherhood, had Judaism conceived of it;

taught it at home; had proclaimed it to the whole world. "Our Father which art in Heaven," whatever construction may be put upon the phrase, is bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh. The appeal was not new for us, no new revelation for the synagogue, however new it may have been for the non-Jewish world.

It has been urged that Jesus proclaimed himself "the son of man" in distinction to those who continued to call themselves sons of Abraham, sons of Judah, sons of Hellas, sons of Rome. The critical student, both of the biography of Jesus and of the old Jewish records, must shake his head in pity for the ignorance, or in anger for the presumption of those that would trestle on such weak supports their airy constructions. If it must be accepted, for the moment let us accept it—that the phrase "son of man," has this point: Jesus is cosmopolitan; he has risen above the narrow limitations of nationality and locality, race and blood; again, our old Bible, our old Testament, by six hundred years is his predecessor, in bringing this thought to a focus. Does not Ezekiel, the prophet of the approaching restoration, the priest drafting the plan of the temple about to be rebuilt, and of the priesthood to be reorganized, call himself בן אנש son of man? If this title tokens universality, Ezekiel assuming it is entitled to the priority by many generations. At all events this universal thought is not an exotic flower in Judaism. On the other hand, however, it cannot be urged that Jesus in using the title "son of man," had at all in mind this universalism. For the very Jesus who is now set up as a type of the man of universal sympathies, cautions his own disciples not to preach the word to non-Israelites. He does not travel in Samaria, because

Samaria is defiled. He warns against throwing the bread to the strangers. He would have it divided among the children of his own people. He talks about casting "pearls before swine"—meaning thereby the non-Jews. Whatever construction we may place upon the title "son of man" we are confronted by the dilemma either to grant that before Jesus's time the title and therefore its implication was assumed by one of our own prophets or that even Jesus was prejudiced—shared all the old national prejudices of his kinsmen. The gospels, purporting to report his sayings, make him out to be a Jew, national to the core, national in his sympathies; proclaiming his doctrines to the Jews and the Jews alone; delighting in being the shepherd of Israel, and not of the lost sheep of other flocks.

But our philological conscience cannot but register its protest against urging the title "son of man" to mean, son of all humanity. The phrase is Aramaic. In the Hebrew of Ezekiel which begins to take an Aramaic coloring, it occurs as well. Both in Hebrew בן אנש and in Aramaic בר־נש it cannot be construed to mean aught but simply human being. Jesus speaks of himself as the "son of man," if any protest was in his thought, it would have been none other than against the imputation of divinity to him. He is the simple "man." In reality the gospels follow consciously in this, as in many more points, the precedent of the Hebrew scriptures. Because Ezekiel was so denoted, the writers of the New Testament use the phrase to describe Jesus. The compounds with בר in Aramaic are in sense mere adjectives. "Son of Man" is in English radically at variance with the sense of the Hebrew בן אנש or the Aramaic ברנש The Hebrew phrase, with the word son, and the similar

Aramaic construction, are idiomatic expressions. In English and in other modern tongues, and in Latin and Greek we should employ adjectives. "Son of man" in Hebrew conveys to one familiar with the genius of the language the notion of our English "human." Thus if that phrase has any bearing other than literal, its force lies in the humanity, in contradistinction to the divinity, of Jesus.

But the morality of Jesus is perhaps broader than that of the synagogue! Certainly no one before Jesus has said—says our liberal lecturer of the Ethical Culture Society, the liberal preacher of the Unitarians, and others,—no one in the synagogue ever could have said, "Love thy neighbor like thyself;" "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Did none before Jesus preach this altruism? Can we overlook Confucius? But of Confucius the Jews knew nothing at that time. Were the Jews then ignorant of the principle? The book of Tobit was composed about three hundred years before the Christian era; it contains the "golden rule." Is it then taken from the New Testament? The book in which it is found is older than the New Testament, the conclusion which is the original is not difficult to draw. Moreover our own Hillel, summed up his religion in this epitome of ethics: "Love thy neighbor like thyself." "What is hateful to thee do not do to thy fellow." "This is Judaism, all the rest is commentary," said he to the heathen, come to be converted, זה כלל גדול שבתורה this was the fundamental proprosition of the law. "Go and study the commentary!" Whose now is the priority, Hillel's or Jesus's? Consult the tables of chronology! Judaism as conceived of by Hillel had on this point nothing to learn

from Jesus. But "Judaism never loved the enemy; never was it said by them of old, 'Love your enemy.'" Perhaps not in so many words! But was this precept ever practiced by the Christians? Exclusion is certainly a strange demonstration of one's love. Exclusion of the descendants of fathers falsely charged with a crime which they never had committed, from political life and civil rights, ostracism from society, refusal of hospitality at public inns,—these are indeed symptoms of a love so strange as to pass all understanding. And then they talk of love to their enemies, when they cannot even love those who are not their enemies! It seems, then, that the Christians no less than others have not been very attentive to the words of Jesus. Let the Christians first learn and practise the doctrines of the Mount, before in blindness superinduced by a beam in their own eye, they would reproach others for the mote in theirs! As a matter of fact, however, the Jews have practiced this "love" for the enemy, and have abhorred "hatred." Not in a spirit of boastfulness do I say this. You know that I protest against this spirit of boastfulness, in season and out of season, perhaps more strongly than is to your liking. Justice, however, warrants the claim, the Jews did love those that hated them and were taught to return good for evil. In the Jewish law, it is said that if enemy and friend need the helping hand, the enemy shall be the first, not the friend, to receive aid. Such is Jewish, Talmudic ethics. Is it then a departure from the truth, to hold that Judaism recognizes the precept, "Thou shalt love thine enemy?" Was it not a principle of the synagogues? The Jews certainly have practiced it. Where was ever Jew whose philanthropy was not broader than race or creed lines? Our

hospitals and training schools are open to all alike. Is the Christian civilization under the Czar's benevolent sceptre an illustration of Christian love? Was it love that made homeless millions of human beings who happened to be of one race with the Nazarene? Is it love that confines as many more to a territory where there is no room for them to live but must rot and die of slow starvation? And our United States Government is willing to do detective work for this organized barbarism, that not content to have thousands in the Siberian mines, upon whom to vent a superabundance of love, is yearning to stretch forth its arms across the ocean in search for other victims of its attachment. When the Czar's name is mentioned at the banquets we rise to do him honor, this despot of Asiatic power. But let a Jewish American venture to plan a visit to this our "friend's" dominion. At the frontier he is told he must stay out. And indeed, who would not be glad to stay out of that hell, that house of bondage! Yet our United States Senator would return thither all whose only offence is to have forged a paper which alone gave them the privilege to get out under the wings of the Russian majesty's paternal care!

We are not enemies of Russia; but in this way we are treated. Contrast Russian love with our Jewish hatred. Had we, to learn the lesson of love, to scan the New Testament! It seems those that profess to be sworn interpreters of the New Testament have not learned it. But the Jews with nothing but the Old Testament and the Talmud seem practically to have applied love as the law that binds us, nay, the vaster family of humanity.

The other principles too, in which the ethics of Jesus are said to be different from ours have never yet been

practically carried out anywhere on earth. Why have the machinery of courts when according to the ethics of New Testament Christianity the murderer should not be punished; the thief should be encouraged; the man that strikes one blow should be asked to strike a second? We have the teacher's own word to this effect. No quibble can lift us over this hard and fast fact. The ethics of Jesus teach non-resistance. Early Christianity reflects a communistic form of society. "Sell all that thou hast and follow me!" is the answer given by Jesus to the rich young man anxious to join his band of disciples. In his kingdom, as he foresaw it, there was no need of money; there was need for love. The early Christians lived in communistic organizations and associations. This is a matter of historical record. The boast of many, indeed, is that they live in accordance with the Sermon on the Mount, their boast is not verified by their actions. The so-called disciples of Christ have not accepted these social doctrines; they have not lived by them, and we have not either more or less than they, but *we* never claimed to have accepted as of divine origin those social principles.

But why, if Jesus was so truly at one with the spiritual elements of Judaism—why was he crucified? To state the matter in brief. the Jews as a whole did not sympathize with his executioners and were not responsible for that crime. Among the Jews there was but one faction that conspired with the Romans to silence this tongue that spoke the message of hope to the downtrodden and enslaved. That small faction was not as you might suppose recruited from the Pharisees. Jesus probably belonged to no party. Men of genius do not wear the uniform of any party; they are a party in

themselves; a power in their own self-centered individuality. But the Pharisees had no reason to be dissatisfied with him. Whatever he lays down in his interpretations of the law is sound pharisaical doctrine. To break the Sabbath for the sake of saving life is a positive command of the Pharisee not a new view and a larger liberty Christianity brought about through Jesus and his disciples. We Jews have certainly learned the old (Jewish) truth: The Sabbath is made for man, not man for the Sabbath. Our official Christianity, however, needs again a Jesus to recall this vital thought to its memory. But the rich among the Jews, the Sadducees, the high priestly family, with whose monopoly to sell at high prices the sacrificial beasts in the Temple and to exchange at usurious rates the foreign coins for the home shekels that could only be accepted in the Temple—these usurers and gamblers in holy things had found in Jesus one who with whip scourged their wretched agents from the Temple. These conspired with their friend Pontius Pilate to put an end to this man that had become so exceedingly inconvenient to them. Such saints there are to be found at all times, in all sects. To-day yet there are denominations who will not have their preachers interfere with their trusts and monopolies. To-day there are Jews who would crucify their rabbi, who dares to call out in protest against gambling and money tyranny of whatever kind. To-day there are those of whatever nation, who call for the police and the army whenever the preacher presumes to sound the warning that "things are rotten in Denmark," and pricks the gaudy bubble of deceptive peace which is internecine war. To-day they would nail to the cross him who cautions to beware of a peace which arrests

progress. They would silence him who would tell them that theirs is the power to change things peacefully, but if the opportunity be lost, the change will come about in the storm of destruction and by the rod of disaster. Small wonder then, that in Jerusalem, those who writhed under the lash in their rude brutality called upon the Roman general to aid them to silence this rebel; in the eyes of the Romans, Jesus was a rebel. He preached the kingdom come.

What did kingdom come mean? Did it point to a kingdom beyond the clouds? It meant liberty for Judaism; restoration of national independence. It meant the driving out of the Romans from the sacred territory. This terrible import the Messianic message had indeed when a few decades later the Jews rose up against the Romans, and in despair struggled two years for their freedom, to be disappointed in defeat, and to be exterminated as a nation forever. Kingdom come, then, was the crying watchword against the Roman. The Roman procurator and the Jewish high priest conspired against him, and without due process of law—I repeat the statement—without due process of law, put to death him who was the mouthpiece of the down-trodden, who had trumpeted forth the hope of his people. The Jews did not reject him. What he brought was their own; what he taught was their own inspiration. But the Pharisees, in the common sense of the word, not in the true sense of the word—the hypocrites, the wealthy, the priests, and the Roman governor, silenced forever that man gifted with eloquence such as had come to few men.

Jesus was indeed one of those rare men that from time to time visit earth, sounding with greater emphasis thoughts that had been promulgated before. I have

said—and Geiger already has raised this point in controversy with Renan and others—that there is no originality in Jesus's doctrines. As a matter of content there is not; for whatever he treats of, has been treated of before. But as a matter of expression, putting the matter so as to vest it with the force of almost a new thought, Jesus—or whoever wrote the New Testament—commands a place among the few chosen of God. The rough diamond he cut and ground so that new light from every facet was sent forth into the astonished world. His words have the stamp of great genius; not so much for what they say, as for the manner in which they are put forth. To the non-Jewish world, even the thought was new; and through Jesus the non-Jewish world learned a new hope, and was led to new heights. Jesus, also, by the light of historical studies, must be credited with a warm heart for the common people. In the Judaism of those days there were three sects. First the Pharisees, the aristocracy of learning despising the ignorant. And one cannot sometimes help sharing or pardoning their contempt for ignorance. Whoever had to deal with presumptuous ignorance, will at times be sorely tempted to harbor the same feeling as the old Pharisees had: that learning is, after all, a privilege which Nabob and Moneybag with all their wealth and resources can never pre-empt; that in the sale of humanity, the mind well cultured weighs much more than the pocket well filled.

The Pharisees were the sect of the learned men, an aristocracy of scholarship; the Sadduccees were an aristocracy of birth, for they were the priests. To their ranks was never admitted one not born of priestly parents. They, of course, despised the common people. The

Essenes, the third but small sect, living under communistic rules, were politically indifferent. Men affecting outward purity by their dress, they shunned certainly the touch of the common people, for the very hem of the garment of an outsider might defile them.

The common people were thus despised by Pharisee, Sadducee and Essene. But the prophet of Nazareth loved the common people, עמי הארץ He associated with the outcasts of society The guests at his table were the publicans and sinners, the lost, often abandoned women. He mingled with the common people; he spoke to them; his disciples were of the common people. He did not think that learning was a crown or that birth did confer a diadem; that outward purity alone gave entrance to kingdom come. But he believed that inward spirituality, and that found among all classes of people, crowned with a tiara studded with jewels more costly than priestly diadem or laurel wreath of learning, or rough woven garment of outward purity. Among the common people he worked and labored; his every thought was consecrated to them; and no wonder that his name to-day yet is the emblem of hope for the down-trodden and the oppressed of all the world.

He belongs to us. Not that we need to go to his books for so-called new thought; not that we need to turn to his life even for inspiration; for the Jew for fifteen centuries has often had to toil up Golgotha's steep and heavy ascent. We bore a cross the weight of which was a thousandfold heavier than that which Jesus carried to the place of his execution. The thorny crown; who wears it? The Jew to-day; the Jew yesterday. He will wear it yet to-morrow. We are prepared for new torture; we who know what it is to be a Jew. The lash;

who felt it? Not Jesus alone. Innumerable are those of his kinsmen that felt the lash; who feel it to-day. The gibe and jeer who has heard them? The Jew. Who has displayed steadfastness? Not merely Jesus prayed: "Not my will but thy will;" the Jew it was who faltered not, because he knew that reservoir of moral force: "Not my will, O God, but thy will:" yea, what but this, has been the sigh and the stay of millions of Jews these fifteen hundred years of tears and torment? Who died with the prayer on the lip: "Father forgive them, they know not what they are doing?" Jesus. Who lives with the prayer on the lip? The Jew. "Father forgive them, they know not what they are doing," is the poem written in the stanzas of suffering by the Jews on thousands and hundreds of thousands of agonizing hearts. Steadfastness in the belief in his own destiny and duty exemplified in the life of Jesus! Yes, nobly so! "If it be thy will that this cup shall pass away;" his prayer in the awful night of Gethsemane. "If it be thy will that this cup pass away," is the prayer of the Jews; has been; is now. But steadfast they remained; they die, if it must be; they live—if it be God's pleasure—for principle's sake. So, what for the outer world was tokened by that one life, millions of lives have emblazoned upon our souls. We needed not higher inspiriation; we had it at home; he was the reflection of Jewish inner life for which the world had waited. He became its anchor and mooring. But it was Judaism that sent out this torch-bearer to light up the inky darkness. No; not merely the liberal Jew, but every Jew who knows his own history will gladly so rank the teacher of Nazareth. No. For ignorance we Jews are

not responsible. For the rantings and ravings of a penny-a-liner on one of the daily journals of this city we are not responsible. I will venture to say there was never a Jew in Chicago that objected to what was said from this pulpit about Jesus, the report to the contrary was gotten up to make a sensation. Anything to make a sensation. In dull times, head lines printed in big letters about "a storm in the camp of Israel raised by remarks on Jesus" attract attention. But if storm there was, it was a storm in a teakettle, and I doubt whether any Jew with any pretention to culture, objected then or objects now to the picture of Jesus's character as drawn on this platform. The Jew, of whatever shade of opinion, is willing to acknowledge the charm, the beauty, the whole-souled perfection of the great prophet of Nazareth. He belongs to us; we have not rejected him. The dream of humanity is ours. The gates of this temple are open to all. Any one may join us; we ask no questions. There is no platform, no movement, so broad as this Jewish movement. But why should we give up what we have had and have for the mere sake of making a demonstration of our liberality? History has not yet run to the end. The full pattern of God is not off the loom. The signs are not for tearing down the walls; the gates are open; we are ready to receive. Shall we step out as long as we are driven back and refused the welcome? If Jesus were to come back to earth to-day, they, the Christians, would not admit him to their clubs because he is a Jew; if St. Paul were to come to life he would not be received; St. Peter would not be allowed to guest at a summer hotel, because, forsooth, he is a Hebrew. And therefore the

synagogue must continue to exist if for no other reason, than to give Jesus a home.

Many among us deplore the existence of Judaism. Born of a Jewish mother they grieve at the fatality of their pedigree. They would be free. They disclaim Jewish religious sympathies. "No rabbi for them!" They are kind enough to contribute to his support. But out of pure pity! These race Jews indeed deserve the rebuffs the world has ready for all Jews. Let them be rejected by European courts or American clubs, we have no tear of sympathy to waste on them. Theirs is a just reminder, that though they would not share Judaism's blessings with us, they bear our common lot. For them it is a gnawing shame; for us a glorious pride. For the true Jew never despairs of the ultimate victory of light over darkness. The time will come when better Christians than now reject, will welcome the better Jews, yea, better than they who now would desert the post of danger, though of duty and honor. The walls then will fall. But in the new temple of humanity, a niche will also be consecrated to the lowly Jew of Nazareth, one of that people called to the hero's, the martyr's crown. A Jew was Jesus, as faithful a Jew as ever drew breath, and *as such* not in opposition to his Judaism, is he the type of a noble-hearted man! Amen.

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